

Mr. Bishop (GA) – Madame Speaker, I am pleased to join Representatives McGovern and Emerson as an original co-sponsor of this bipartisan amendment, which affirms the intention of Congress to combat domestic childhood obesity and hunger in the interests of our national security.

According to a July 2009 Trust for America's Health Report, the percentage of obese and overweight children (ages 10 to 17) is at or above 30% in 30 states. Seven of the top ten states are in the South, with my state of Georgia ranking third with 37.3% of obese and overweight youngsters. Obesity is especially prevalent in the African-American and Latino communities.

Overweight and obese teens are at risk of developing diabetes, heart disease, cancer, stroke, arthritis, and breathing problems; and American children are disproportionately impacted.

In a recent report, "Too Fat to Fight," over 100 retired generals and admirals wrote that obesity among children and young adults has increased so dramatically that it threatens not only the Nation's health, but the future of our military." Between 1995 and 2008, the military had 140,000 individuals, a 70% increase, who showed up at the centers for processing, but failed their entrance physicals because they were too heavy; 1,200 enlistees were discharged before their contracts were up; and now being overweight is the leading medical cause for rejection from military service.

Proper nutrition, healthy food, ending hunger, and access to physical activity for our youth are vital to ensuring that our nation's military remains strong for the future. I urge my colleagues to support this important amendment, in an effort to support and maintain a strong national defense by assuring strong and healthy service members.